

RELIGIOUS INQUIRER.

COME NOW, AND LET US REASON TOGETHER.—ISAIAH 1. 18.

EDITED BY REV. R. CARRIQUE.—PUBLISHED BY AN ASSOCIATION OF GENTLEMEN.

VOL. II.]

HARTFORD, (CONN.) JUNE 23, 1823.

[NO. 17.]

MINUTES

OF THE

SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSALISTS.

The Ministers and Delegates composing the Southern Association, convened according to adjournment at the house of Br. Thomas G. Farnsworth in Stafford, (Conn.) on Tuesday the 10th of June 1823. Commenced the labors of the Session by uniting in solemn and fervent prayer with Br. DAVID PICKERING.

Br. HOSEA BALLOU, Moderator.

Br. RICHARD CARRIQUE, Clerk.

Received a request from the Societies recently formed in Hanson, and Wilbraham, (Mass.) to be admitted into fellowship with the societies forming this Association; which request was granted.

Appointed Brs. R. CARRIQUE, J. BISBE, and D. PICKERING, a committee to receive requests for Ordination, or letters of fellowship, and to make report thereon to the Association.

Closed the business of the evening with prayer by Br. J. Bisbe.

Wednesday morning 3 o'clock assembled agreeable to the adjournment of last evening at the house of Br. Jasper Hyde; and commenced the business of the Association, by seeking the divine favor and blessing. Prayer by Br. THOS. WHITTEMORE.

Attended to the arrangement of the public services.

Morning Service.

Introductory prayer by Br. Hosea Ballou, 2d.

Sermon by Br. Jacob Frieze,—text 1 John iv. 3, "God is Love."

Concluding prayer by Br. Thomas Whittemore.

Afternoon Service.

Introductory prayer by Br. Paul Dean.

Sermon by Br. D. Pickering,—text Psalm xlii. 11, "Hope thou in God."

Concluding prayer by Br. Zelotes Fuller.

Evening Service.

Introductory prayer by Br. John Bisbe.

Sermon by Br. T. Whittemore,—text Acts xxviii. 22, "But we desire to hear of thee, what thou thinkest; for concerning this sect we know that every where it is spoken against."

Concluding prayer by Br. T. G. Farnsworth.

Convened in Council, and having attended to business of a general nature, closed by uniting in prayer with Br. Paul Dean.

Thursday morning the council assembled at 8 o'clock. Br. J. Flagg addressed the throne of grace, beseeching the Father of mercies to grant his blessing on our labors.

The committee appointed to receive requests for Ordination or letters of fellowship, reported that they had received a request from Br. Z. Fuller for Ordination, and from Brs. Lucius R. Page and William Morse for letters of fellowship, and recommended that the same be severally granted.

The attention of the association was then called to the consideration of two communications published in the Christian Repository for December 1822—entitled an "Appeal to the World"—and a "Declaration", having for their authors certain Brethren in fellowship with this association; which communications indicate a breach of fellowship, and are injurious to the good feelings, and harmony which ought ever to prevail among brethren engaged in one cause, having for the end of their labors, the cultivation of the moral and social virtues; the liberation of the human mind from prejudice and bigotry; and the production in the heart of the spirit of benevolence, philanthropy and love.

Voted, That the said "Appeal" and "Declaration" be referred to a committee of three, for their examination; and that they report what notice this Association ought to take of the same. Brs. R. Carrique, J. Bisbe, and J. Frieze, were appointed on this committee.

Public Service Thursday Morning.

Introductory prayer by Br. D. Pickering.

Sermon by Br. J. Bisbe,—text, Acts, xix. 23. "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you."

Concluding prayer by H. Ballou, 2d.

Ordination Services.

Introductory prayer by Br. R. Carrique.

Sermon by Br. H. Ballou,—text 2 Cor. iv. 5. "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus sake."

Consecrating prayer by Br. J. Flagg.

Charge by Br. R. Carrique.

Right hand of fellowship and concluding prayer by H. Ballou 2d.

The committee to whom was referred the consideration of the "Appeal" and "Declaration," made the following report which was adopted by the unanimous vote of the members of the Association.*

This Association considers it expedient to express this public disapprobation of a DECLARATION, and an APPEAL which appeared in the Christian Repository for December 1822, as they tend to dissolve the bonds of union, by manifesting a disposition in their authors to deprive us of the name and character of christian ministers.

Voted, That Brs. Carrique, Bisbe, and Frieze be a committee to write to the brethren who are the authors of the Appeal and Declaration and make known to them the views entertained by this Association of said communications.

Voted, That Br. R. Carrique prepare the minutes of the proceedings of this Association, and accompany the same with a circular letter; and that he be requested to publish the same in the RELIGIOUS INQUIRER, printed in Hartford, (Conn.)

Voted, That the next Association be held in Milford, (Mass.) on the second Wednesday and Thursday in December next. Closed the business of the Session uniting in praise and thanksgiving with Br. H. Ballou.

HOSEA BALLOU, Moderator.

RICHARD CARRIQUE, Clerk.

*Br. P. Dean had returned to Boston.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

The MINISTERS and MESSENGERS composing the Southern Association, united in christian fellowship, and enjoying that hope of eternal life, "which God that cannot lie promised before the world began," send christian salutation to their brethren possessing like precious faith, and who relying on the word of promise, and believing all things written in the law and the prophets, look forward with joy and gladness; beholding with the EYE of faith, that glorious period, when every creature which is in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them shall join in one anthem of grateful praise; singing in the spirit of holy and sincere affection: Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.

BELOVED BRETHREN, it has pleased the Lord of the harvest to strengthen the hands of his servants, whom He has called to the work of the gospel ministry, by granting them the pleasing satisfaction of beholding their labors effective of much good, in liberating the mind from the bondage of superstition and bigotry; removing the dark cloud of ignorance, which has long separated men from their God; and enabling them through the knowledge of the truth to look unto the Creator of all things, as their FATHER and friend, relying on his promises, and trusting in his goodness and mercy.

A goodly number of brethren, united in one FAITH and one HOPE, were indulged with the opportunity of meeting together, to consult on those measures best calculated to promote the cause of righteousness and truth; to give energy to them who labor in the vineyard of the gospel; and strength to those who having received the testimony of God's universal benevolence, rejoice to behold the Captain of their salvation, going forth a victorious conqueror, subduing all things unto himself; causing the light of divine truth, to beam upon the understanding, and the spirit of heaven-born charity to take possession of the hearts of men.

The labors of the session were rendered truly encouraging to those, who are called, like the apostle of the Lamb, to labor and suffer reproach for believing in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, by learning from each other the prosperous state of the churches and societies in fellowship with this association; to hear of their goodly order, their unanimity, harmony and peace: their continued increase in numbers, in faith, and in love. We had the satisfaction of receiving two new societies into fellowship, and also of granting letters to two young brethren, who have renounced the traditions of men; received the gospel of the Lord Jesus in its purity and simplicity, unshackled with creeds or human inventions; and, who have come forward in behalf of their divine Master declaring that "God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." The high recommendation we received of the moral rectitude, humility and talents of our young brethren, induces us to believe they will be faithful and useful in the gospel ministry, and to bid them welcome to the joys and pleasures, the trials, crosses, and persecutions which in common with us they will have to encounter and pass through. In the midst of trials they will remember that the master whom they serve, endured the bitter persecutions and revilings of men, and notified his servants that they would experience the same. The grace of our God will, however, be found sufficient to support in the midst of trials, and the spirit of universal love, will enable them manfully to fight the good fight of faith, and in meekness to endeavor to instruct those, who through ignorance oppose themselves to the gospel of Christ.

The Father of our spirits smiled upon us, during the session, granting us a large and attentive audience; giving animation and zeal to those engaged in the songs of the temple; and wisdom and energy to his servants who enjoyed the happy lot of administering the bread and waters of

life, feeding the flock of God with the heavenly manna; and refreshing the thirsty soul from the pure chrystal stream of eternal life. Our hearts burned within us when the messengers of peace declared from the divine word, that "God is Love," and shewed, in the demonstration of the spirit, that the Lord is good, impartially good to all his creatures, and that his tender mercies are over all the works of his hands. Believing that God loved us even when we were dead in sins, and hath promised us life in his Son, which promise is confirmed by the oath of Jehovah, we were persuaded to flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us. To hope in God, and to enjoy all that consolation, peace and rest, which is the effect of confidence in the divine word of our heavenly Father. And, as the believers, in that Gospel which God preached to Abraham, saying "in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed;" being turned every one from his iniquities, are every where spoken against, we were invited to enter into a careful examination of the doctrine as taught by the apostles, and primitive christians, & the reception they met with from the opposers of the gospel. It was ascertained, that the apostles were every where spoken against, persecuted, and ill treated, their preaching misrepresented, and themselves represented as disturbers of the peace, and the corrupters of the morals of mankind. But even in that age of prejudice and darkness, there were some found whose honesty, and love of truth induced them to inquire of the Apostles themselves respecting the doctrines they taught. From this fact the following useful lesson was impressed upon the mind, that the best and surest way to obtain a correct knowledge of the sentiments embraced by any particular sect of men is to go to them for information, and not to the enemies and opposers of their sentiments, who from sinister motives might be induced grossly to misrepresent their system of faith; which in the most clear and lucid manner was shown to be the case, with those who oppose the doctrine of universal benevolence, who most cruelly and wickedly misrepresent the doctrine; and say, that we believe in certain things, which we condemn and reject, as inconsistent and absurd.

Fully persuaded that iniquity abounds with many who verily believe, that by opposing those who differ from them in religious sentiments, they are doing God service, and who have adopted the popish doctrine that the end sanctifies the means; our minds were prepared to enter into the investigation of the causes which produced those effects. It was shown by convincing and incontrovertible proof that men in all ages have endeavored to imitate the God whom they worshiped, and that the characters of men were generally formed according to the views they entertained of their God. When men behold the Almighty as a sovereign tyrant, implacable and cruel; revengeful, passionate and unjust; deceiving his off-spring with promises of life, when he means their eternal ruin; expressing a willingness that all men should be saved while he has a secret, determinate, and irrevocable WILL, that a certain portion shall suffer his wrath forever, and ever; they being transformed into the image of their God, practice those cruelties and deceptions which they suppose him to perform towards men; and consider themselves as possessing all religion and piety, while they are violating all those heavenly virtues contained in the religion of Jesus.

Our public services closed with the solemn and important services of ordaining, and setting apart a brother to the important duties of the gospel ministry. The candidate, and his brother laborers in the vineyard of God, were sensibly impressed with the truth of the declaration, made by St. Paul, that we ought not to preach ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord; and to consider ourselves as the servants of the people for Jesus sake. That we ought ever to preach Christ, as he was preached by the prophets of old. As the promised seed, in whom all the families of the earth shall be blessed. As the finisher of sin. The bruiser of the serpents' head; and, as the king of Zion who must reign until he hath subdued all things unto him-

self, and reconciled all things to God. That we preach Jesus as he preached himself; the way, the truth, and the life. The Saviour of the world, and the RESTORER of men to holiness and happiness.

In the midst of our joys, we found cause for regret and heart felt sorrow, being called upon to notice certain publications, laid before the public by brethren in the fellowship of this association, which, we fear, has a tendency to dissolve the bond of union which has so long happily existed; to give the enemy an opportunity for triumph; and to wound the feelings of the lovers of truth and righteousness. We earnestly hope, and indulge ourselves in the belief, that the cloud which has interrupted our felicity will be but transient and of momentary duration. That the all piercing rays of the sun of LOVE will dissolve the cloud, and that the spirit of divine benevolence, and fraternal affection will disperse every deliterious particle, that poisons the cup of blessing, and destroys fellowship among brethren. We beseech you brethren, believers with us in the faith of Abraham, in the name of the God and Father of our spirits, that ye live together in love. Let no trifling peculiarities of religious opinion, break your fellowship for one another. While each one considers it his privilege, and right to think for himself on the important concerns of religion, and to determine according to the evidences he receives from the divine testimony as to points of doctrine: yet let each consider, that others enjoy the same privileges in common with himself. Let us then as believers in the ultimate restitution of all things (or all men) to holiness and happiness, obey the golden rule by doing unto others as we would they should do unto us. Let the divine and glorious hope of meeting each other, and the whole family of mankind, in the kingdom of peace and eternal enjoyment, keep alive in our hearts the power of love, unite us in all the energies of brotherly affection, and enable us so to live in fellowship, and in the faithful discharge of every moral obligation; that we may put to silence the gainsaying of the enemy; and as laborers together in one common cause, spread the joyful tidings of peace and salvation among the children of men gladdening their hearts with the hope of eternal life.

Brethren we commend you to God, and the word of his grace; devoutly praying that you may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour by well ordered lives and conversation; that you may enjoy divine consolation in the hour of death, and at last be received into glory.

Per Order,

R. CARRIQUE.

COMMUNICATIONS.

FOR THE INQUIRER.

CONSISTENCY.

Having in the first number considered the palpable disagreement between pretended orthodoxy and scripture in some points, we shall in this number pursue the same plan, for the purpose of restoring christianity to its primitive clearness and simplicity. When all classes of believers in revelation declare they take the Bible for their directory, and grossly and constantly violate its plainest teachings both in theory and practice, it appears certain that they do not understand its doctrine, or that they strangely and wickedly pervert it. The scriptures inculcate many duties, by showing our complete dependence on God, the richness of his favors and the freeness and eternity of his love; urging us from these reasons to entertain kindly affections for our fellow dependants, to give freely as we have received, and to love all creatures as God loves them. Taking these principles for our guide, let us see how creeds and practice accord with the sacred standard. That enjoins the compassionate treatment of enemies, by saying, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. In this direction it is not said nor intimated that the

importunity of the enemy should influence the christian to satisfy his hunger or thirst, but it is clearly implied that godlike charity should anticipate any request. This same doctrine of sympathy and relief is again admirably enforced in the parable of the wounded Jew, in which the possibility of solicitation is in a great measure precluded. The conclusion we are justified in making, when assistance is not given to friend and enemy, is, the love of God dwells not in the heart of the self-styled christian. As our Father in heaven has exhibited his character and conduct for our attainment and imitation, it necessarily follows, as he is a reasonable being, that our crination consists in want of conformity to the heavenly pattern. This being the fact, what can we reply to the following statement? But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? Does it not hence appear that God's love induces him to bestow good on all the necessitous? But should the great Almoner, who has all the bread of life, the waters of salvation and the robes of righteousness, say to any or all our hungry, thirsting and naked race, depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; although he should not give them those things which are needful for the soul; what would it profit? Solemn protestations of concern for the sufferer never yet gave bread to the hungry, clothed the naked with a garment, or took the prisoner from his dungeon and his chains, and gave him the air and light of heaven. The point at issue is intelligible to all. How can God accuse us of disobedience, if we withhold relief from the distressed, or neglect to assist them, when he prescribes his conduct for our example, and withholds salvation from millions, or neglects to give it them? The argument of supremacy is both obsolete and irrational, and were its strength granted, would be entirely inapplicable to this case. Burlamagni has justly observed, that wisdom, power, and goodness joined together constitute the true foundation of sovereignty, and that the author of our being has no right to control us, because he has made us, but because wise and benevolent ends were intended in our creation, and because he possesses power and disposition to accomplish them in the best manner. But as has been already remarked, the plea of sovereignty has no bearing on this point. Does God require us to obey his commands on account of their reasonableness, and because complying with them advances our happiness, or merely to display his supremacy, by enjoining us to observe the arbitrary decisions of his will? If from the first cause, we are bound by every thing tender and sacred to yield the undivided obedience of our hearts; if from the second, we see no more propriety in bowing to the despotism of heaven, than to the tyranny of earth. Should it be pleaded that an arbitrary distribution of blessings is the scheme of impartial wisdom and goodness, and that God has an unquestioned right to pardon whom he will, and to punish eternally whom he pleases, the cruelties of every tyrant will be fully justified, and mankind may defend themselves in all circumstances, by saying their conduct is not more partial and oppressive than the government of God. But we are taught by John, that a man cannot withhold the goods of earth from a needy brother, and possess the love of God in his heart. Now if a denial of the things of earth prove that a man is not actuated by the charity of heaven, by what feelings is that being moved, who sees the human family in perishing need of the bread of life, who has bread enough, and to spare, and who simply says, be ye filled, without giving them those things which are indispensable to satisfy the hunger of the soul? As the scriptures assert that God is no respecter of persons, and that he opens his hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing, we should naturally conclude, if he directed us to imitate his conduct, that we were authorized to treat men as he treats them, and to expect the reward of obedience. But the views we oppose, not only make God at war with scripture and reason, but command us to be perfect as he is, by taking a course he has never

pursued. If Christ be God's interpreter, and if his actions furnish criteria on which to make a decision, we would ask why he recommended the conduct of the Samaritan, rather than that of the Priest or the Levite, if his Father will pity and relieve starving sinners, as they did him who fell among thieves? And why could not the Priest and Levite have urged in justification of their cruelty, that they were required to be perfect as God, and that they imitated him with fidelity, according to their knowledge of his character?—Now, with these inquiries and illustrations before us, can we say to whom the blessed approval will be given? to the impartially kind, the universally compassionate, or to the partial, the unkind and the uncharitable? If the hypothesis against which we contend be true, and the first class be applauded, it will not be for their resembling God, nor for keeping his commandments. But if men are to receive the benediction of God for disobeying him, all our principles of reasoning are useless, we know not on what to found a conclusion. Should the second class be accepted, those will receive the acquittal and commendation of the Father, who have been condemned by the Son. If God has sent his Son to teach us the truth, and to exemplify its influence in the deeds of his life, and has called him his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased, how can he reverse his decisions, impeach his judgment, and destroy his character? But it is certain that the Samaritan is the only person in the parable whose example Christ directs the lawyer to imitate. Now, should God pass any of the prodigals of our race in the famine of the far country without affording relief, would not his unfeelingness be censured by the rules he has given us, and would he not appear in the character of the Priest and Levite, according to the doctrine of his Son? Nothing is a plainer truth, than that example is far more effectual than precept; that practice is better than theory. This remark is as applicable to the first, as to any subordinate being in the universe, particularly when his conduct is made our model. Our opinion on this subject is well expressed in these verses of Claudian.

"Would you your public laws should sacred stand,
Lead first the way, and act what you command,
The crowd grow mild and tractable to see
The author governed by his own decree.
The world turns round, as its great Master draws,
And princes' lives bind stronger than their laws."

As we cannot serve two masters, and as God is the only good being, obedience to him is required by our love of happiness, and by every desire we feel to promote the peace and enjoyment of all about us, and of the whole world. This view accords with our sentiment, but that its strength may be fully displayed, let us try the converse of this proposition. We cannot serve two masters, and are bound by a law paramount to all others, to seek our own happiness; God is a malignant being, and orders us to do that which would render us and others miserable, are we under any obligation to obey him? in the same proposition that we regard ourselves and others, shall we detest such a being, and strive to free ourselves from his tyranny; for malignity gives no authority on one part, nor imposes any obligation on the other. It hence follows, that if a being is possessed of all power and a malevolent heart, he has no right to control a single creature, as legitimate sovereignty is founded on *goodness, wisdom* and power. Should it be replied that God is not malignant, but that he is inconsistent with himself, in directing men to imitate his example, the answer confutes itself; for as he must foresee the evil that will result from an endeavor to be like him, he must intend it, when he commands us by the lips of his Son to be merciful as he is. From the preceding reasoning it appears, that unless God's conduct is in strict agreement with the maxims of scripture, the doctrine and life of Jesus and the general reason of things, he requires us to be miserable, whenever he requires us to regulate our thoughts and actions by his example. Unless he created

all for happiness, and will ultimately render all possessors of that for which they are formed, he must be either unwise, or malignant; if unwise, he is unworthy the homage of rational beings; if malignant, it is not in their power to revere him. To set the matter in a clear light, we will examine the only three cases that can be supposed. "Had the Creator given existence to the creature only to render it unhappy, the relation of Creator and creature would still subsist, and yet we could not possibly conceive, in this supposition, either right or obligation. The irresistible power of the Creator might indeed constrain the creature; but this constraint would never form a reasonable obligation, a moral tie; because an obligation of this nature always supposes the concurrence of the will, and an approbation or an acquiescence on the part of man, from which voluntary submission arises. Now this acquiescence could never be given to a being, that would exert his supreme power only to oppress his creature, and render it unhappy. The quality of the Creator therefore is not alone and of itself sufficient to establish the right of command, and the obligation of obeying." This case appears plain, for were we formed for unhappiness, and acquainted with our destiny, we should have no reason to be grateful for existence, nor one solitary obligation to adore God. "But if to the idea of the Creator we join the idea of a being perfectly wise and sovereignly good, who has no desire of exercising his power, but for the good and a advantage of his creatures; then we have every thing necessary to found a legitimate authority." This case simply inculcates the doctrine that we ought to love God, because he first loved us, and gave us life, and every blessing richly to enjoy. The only remaining supposition is the fancy of the Epicureans, who imagined the Gods enjoying their happiness with the highest peace and tranquility, far removed from the troublesome care of human business, and neither smiling at the good, nor frowning at the wicked deeds of men. This total indifference to our condition can neither inspire reverence, nor kindle devotion. Learning that we are created for no end, and that our former is entirely insensible to our joy or our sorrow, being wholly engrossed with his own pleasure, could give us no satisfaction, nor furnish us one motive for virtuous ambition. Indeed, under such circumstances, the distance of God would give us no joy, and his destruction no pain. From the three suppositions which have been made, this seems a fair and necessary inference, that unless we are formed for happiness, we are bound by no command of God; for if he be our enemy, we are constrained to obey the law of our nature, which directs us to seek happiness, rather than the positive and unfriendly requirements of any being. It would seem that all must admit the conclusiveness of this argument, for unless an obligation to seek our own happiness be paramount to all others, disinterested benevolence might be proved, and men directed to perform acts, which would not conduce to the good of their race. For allowing the solicitude of uninterested kindness, did men feel no concern for the effect of their deeds on others, they could take no pleasure in performing them, so that their unhappiness would balance the satisfaction they might occasion. But if God commands us to do that which advances our happiness, and that of all, recommending his conduct for our pattern, while he acts in entire and constant opposition to the rules he has given us, although we may and ought to acknowledge the goodness of the directions, we shall receive no additional excitement to obedience from his example, nor cherish any higher veneration for him, by discovering this disagreement between his words and actions. Indeed, no wise being could take this course, as he would clearly perceive that he was counteracting his own purpose. Now, as a closer relation subsists between God and man, than between any of his creatures, how can he see them starving for the bread of heaven, and withhold it, or neglect to give it through eternity, and feel that love for them, which he requires us to possess, and to manifest to each other? On the principle we oppose, the catholics might defend the inquisition, the

rack, and the *auto-da-fe*, by contending that they treat heretics as God treats his enemies, and that their conduct is an earnest endeavor to comply with the command of the Saviour, be ye merciful, be ye perfect as your Father in heaven. What could be urged against such a plea for cruelty, but the undisguised assumption of the fact, that God loves all, that this is the perfection of his character, and that we should resemble him by loving each other, as he loves all? In truth, orthodoxy gives God a character, which is in no respect preferable to that of the heathen jupiter; for instead of showing that his ways are above our ways and his thoughts above our thoughts, as heaven is above earth, it brings him down to the level of humanity, and gives him all the worst passions of his creatures, so that he might hold an elevated station among

"Gods partial, changeful, passionate, unjust,
Whose attributes were rage, revenge, or lust."

The contemplation of such a Divinity is fitted neither to reconcile man to his lot, to expand his understanding, or purify his morals; but it is calculated to deaden all his nobler powers, and to reduce him to the condition of the brute. Is it possible therefore that a wise and benevolent God has given us a pattern to imitate, the contemplation and copying of which, would render us miserable? The bare admission of this, disproves both wisdom and benevolence. The natural and necessary induction from all these particulars is, that God is good and happy; that his goodness is the foundation of his happiness, and that he commands us to be good as he is, that we may be happy as he is. Such a representation of the great King of the universe endears him to our hearts, gives double impression to every law of gratitude, and engages every affection of our souls in sincere, constant and joyful obedience. And though we may tremble before a God of a different character, and feel a chilling horror lest we should transgress his stern mandates, this is the only being we can admire in our hearts, and strive to resemble in our lives. In order however to love God, it is necessary that we understand what are the qualities of his nature; what benefits he has conferred on us; what advantage there would be in serving him, and the fitness of all his laws and providences to effect the highest good for each creature in the universe.

POLYCARP.

FOR THE INQUIRER.

Mr. Editor,—As the commentaries of Mr. Scott, have had a very extensive circulation in this country during the last twelve years, and as he is considered as orthodox, by the sticklers for interminable misery. I will thank you to publish, not the *opinions* of this celebrated commentator, but what he asserts to be *fact*. Whatever may be the feelings of his admirers, we trust they will be so consistent as not to make him a liar in *matters of fact*, and still anathematize those as infidels who doubt his infallibility in the vagaries of a disturbed imagination.

D. C.

"And yet *facts* *undeniably* show, that men venture upon sin, even with the threatening of everlasting misery sounding in their ears; nay, with the trembling apprehension of it dimming their hearts; for *divine* as well as human laws, are weak through the flesh, and with all their *SANCTIONS* and *barriers*, are *unable* to affix boundaries to the swelling tide of human depravity."

Query. If this is a true record, what becomes of the boasted "*sanctions* of the divine law," supposed to arise from the promulgation of this vindictive doctrine? One more query, and I have done. If the laws (law) of God are incompetent to the object intended, why did the Psalmist speak of them (it) as *perfect*, converting the soul?

The same author, speaking of the character of God, as gathered from the scriptures, says, "His character, as there delineated, comprises all possible excellence, without any intermixture; His *LAWS* and ordinances accord to his *perfections*; his works and dispensations exhibit them; and

all his dealings with his creatures bear the stamp of infinite wisdom, power, justice, purity, truth, goodness, and mercy, harmoniously displayed." Can we add to this character?

RELIGIOUS INQUIRER.

SATURDAY, June 23, 1823.

CLERICAL INGENUITY DISPLAYED,

In the exhibition of two Chinese youth in the North Church in this City, for the purpose of collecting money.

Our friends, in different sections of the country will undoubtedly be surprised, on learning, that in this highly favored city, renowned for the piety and science of its inhabitants, such a singular farce should be played off upon the people, as the exhibition of two youths, said to be from India, in their native garments, &c.

The following notice, was circulated through the city on Thursday the 19th inst. in hand bills, distributed in every shop and pasted on the posts, corners of the streets, and at all public places.

"NOTICE

Is hereby given, that at a quarter before EIGHT, this EVENING, there will be two CHINESE YOUTHS at the Brick Meeting House, in Hartford, who are on their way to the Cornwall School.—To gratify the curiosity of those interested, they will appear in their Chinese costume, and will read in the Chinese New Testament.—They are recently from Canton, and from their interesting appearance, strong hopes are entertained that they may be rendered extensively useful hereafter in diffusing a knowledge of salvation among the many millions in China. To assist in their education, a contribution will be taken up after the exhibition."

As was expected, the above notice drew together a large concourse of people, who collected to see the young Chinese in their native *costume*, and their curiosity was excited by an intimation that one of the heathen Gods would be exhibited. After prayer and singing, we are informed the EXHIBITION commenced, (we say *exhibition*, because the friends of the proceedings use the term in their public notice. They say, "a contribution will be taken up after the EXHIBITION.") by a Rev. Clergyman, notifying the audience of the singular and wonderful hand of Providence in bringing the lads to this country; of their being found in the streets of Philadelphia by a pious and benevolent clergyman, (who, if we have been rightly informed, has been exhibiting them in the different towns and cities through which they passed, taking up contributions for their education &c.) expressing his full belief that God must have some great work for them to do, as he had raised them up friends, and in almost a miraculous manner furnished them with money, &c. and by endeavoring to persuade the people that it was their duty to give liberally for the education of these youth.

To give more effect to those eloquent pleadings for money, the lads were exhibited on a stage made in front of the pulpit, dressed in the costume of their country. One of the Rev. Managers of the exhibition, next received from one of the youths, a shoe which he had taken from his foot, and held it up to the view of the astonished and wondering multitude, who were fully persuaded by the looks of the shoe, and the remarks of the Rev. Speaker that it was not such a shoe as is worn in America. The several articles of dress were next examined, as far as propriety would permit as to their form, and stuff. The speaker without doubt labored to show, that the uncouth or singular form of dress, was the effects of their gross idolatry and superstitious

tion. Of this we are almost certain, for after examining or rather directing the searching eyes of the audience, to the dress of the youths (which we have no doubt was put on for the exhibition of the evening) from the shoes even to the wig or cap which they wore on their heads; the Rev. Mr. — took from his pocket the Shoe of a Chinese Lady, very small indeed, and almost produced a flood of tears among the ladies present, by portraying to them the horrible effects of superstition, in cramping and compressing the ladies feet into such a small compass, to honor, or please some idol God worshiped in India. Such abominable superstition ought to be destroyed, and every sincere lover of souls would be willing to give liberally to convert men from the worship of Gods, who delight in such cruelty.

From the ladies shoe, the attention of the audience was directed to the view of a small wooden image that had been carefully concealed under a handkerchief, or cloth, lest the view of all the wonderful objects, at once, should be too much for the vision of the spectators. This image was said to be one of the heathen Idols, or Gods. The presence of this wooden God aided the speaker much in his begging, as the enlightened minds of the audience must have been convinced, that people who could worship such a God as that, must be very ignorant indeed, and needed the assistance of the learned world, to spread before them the means of information. They must, therefore, have felt willing to contribute something to remove the ignorance of these unfortunate people.

We have been thus particular in noticing this EXHIBITION, as we consider it, an imposition upon the public, and that it ought to be held up to merited contempt. There appears in the transaction something despicable. To take two young lads who cannot speak the English language, to exhibit them, in a peculiar dress to excite attention, and thus collect large sums of money, is what we conceive, no enlightened or liberal minded man can, or will approve. It is one of those ingenious contrivances, in which the clergy are so fruitful, to seize upon the people's money: and they seem determined if they can neither persuade nor frighten them out of their property, they will beguile them out of it, by such exhibitions.

But, for what, is this money, collected by the exhibition of these youths, the shoes, and wooden God, to be expended. It is said in the notice, "to assist in their education"—but will it be expended for this. If we are rightly informed one of the Rev. gentlemen, observed that the whole contribution would not be exclusively for their use, but for the benefit of the Cornwall School. The gentleman was probably afraid the contribution would not be as large as was wished if confined exclusively to their education. But admitting the whole money thus laid out, what do they expect to do with these lads. They say, "*strong hopes*" are entertained that they may be rendered extensively useful hereafter in diffusing a knowledge of salvation among the many millions in China."

On what, we ask, are those "*STRONG HOPES*" founded? Have they made a profession of religion? No. It is true, they can read in the Chinese New Testament, but the people were told they did not understand what they read. That they had no knowledge of God, and knew nothing of the christian religion. That the young men were very ignorant of what they were about, and what were the views of the managers of the exhibition, appeared very evident to some that were present, and it was also apparent, that such shows were not calculated to impress them with very exalted ideas of the knowledge and customs of those around them, for when the shoes, clothes, and god were exhibited, they were observed to look sily at each other and laugh, laughing probably at their enlightened and knowing spectators.

We return to the question, on what are those "*strong hopes*" which are entertained of the future usefulness of these lads, predicated? The reason given is "their interesting appearance." We know not but these calvinistic

clergymen possess that discerning spirit, which enables them to know by appearances alone, whether a man is one of the elect or not; and that they from simple appearance have good ground on which to build a "*strong hope*" that these young men will make useful Calvinistic preachers. It is acknowledged that although they can read the New Testament in their own native language, yet they do not understand any thing in it. They are ignorant of God, and the christian religion, notwithstanding all this their appearance furnishes ground for a "*strong hope*" that they will diffuse the knowledge of Salvation (that is, Calvinism) among the many millions of China.

It is a matter of surprise to find men, who are continually boasting of their learning and talents, suffering themselves to be made dupes of the cunning & designing, or that they should be so blinded as not see, that if the calvinistic doctrine, in which they profess to believe, be true, it is useless and vain for them to trouble themselves about the fate of the heathen. If God has elected a certain few unto eternal life. Has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass. And, has by the counsel of his own will, determined what should become of every man; then those, whom he has decreed unto eternal life, will inevitably be saved whether inhabitants of China or of America; and those, whom God, for the manifestation of his own glory has foreordained to everlasting death, must and will be damned Missionaries, or no Missionaries. When will men open their eyes to behold the absurdities in which they are involved, and cease to act so inconsistently in matters of religion. Why will they suffer themselves to be misled, and made the tools of a designing priesthood. We have no wish to wound the feelings of our fellow men, but when we see such measures resorted to, to take money from the unreflecting part of community; to remain silent, would be participating in the crime. We feel no disposition to sport with the weaknesses of our fellow-men, they demand our pity, and we say in sincerity we are grieved to see them yielding to such crafty measures as are adopted, to obtain their money.

We have recently received a pamphlet entitled the NEW JERUSALEM MISSIONARY, to be published monthly in the City of NEW-YORK at \$3 per annum.—In this work it is designed, to state and defend the doctrines peculiar to the New Jerusalem Church, or those doctrines taught by EMANUEL SWEDENBORG.

We present our readers with a statement of their system of faith, as acknowledged by M. B. Roche, who was formerly a clergyman of the Episcopal church, and Rector of Trinity Church in Philadelphia—but who has recently renounced his former religious opinions & joined the NEW JERUSALEM CHURCH. On taking leave of the people of his charge, he gave his reasons for his change of sentiment, and briefly stated the following articles of faith.—As they appear in the "Missionary" we may fairly consider them as the Faith of that Church.

1. I believe that Jesus Christ is the one Jehovah in Divine Humanity; in whom there is a sacred Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

2. That the Scriptures are divinely inspired, and written in correspondencies, having a celestial, a spiritual, and a natural meaning.

3. That we are not justified and saved by faith alone is a most unwholesome doctrine, leading on one hand to presumption, and on the other to despair.

4. That the natural body, which we now have, will never be resumed after death; but that, immediately after we die, we shall arise in a spiritual body, which will be in every respect in appearance like that we now have.

5. That, after death, man goes to a state suitable to his condition, and either enjoys eternal pleasure or eternal pain, as his life has been good or evil.

6. That the Lord is willing to save all, and never of himself condemns any one to hell, but they who are lost, perish by their own rejection of the Lord.

7. That no forms and ceremonies are prescribed in the Gospel, and that men may worship God acceptably, with or without a set form; though a liturgy appears most consistent with order, and that used by the Episcopal Church would be highly proper, if some slight alterations were made.

8. That this world shall not be destroyed by fire, but shall continue to exist for ever; and that what is intended by those passages which seem to declare such destruction, is an universal spread of the Divine Love, whereby error shall be consumed.

A SUGGESTION CLAIMING NOTICE.

A gospel minister in Boston, once discoursing to his people on the doubts with which the believer is sometimes distressed, remarked, that this was no just argument against religion in general, nor any particular denomination.—“Could you, said he, look into the breast *even of an Universalist*, it is probable you might discover that sometimes he had doubts of the truth of his doctrine.” WITNESS.

When copying this I did not intend to remark, but as a volunteer offers, I give it room. Our opposers fall out with us “by the way” for believing too much, and advise us to doubt, as the safer of the two. In the next breath it is said of us, that we doubt, and recant, and therefore, our religion is proved false. On the theory of our opponents, and according to their statement, we are certainly as orthodox as they are. Does one of their members die rejoicing in the strong hope of salvation by Christ, it is blazoned in the public papers from Maine to Georgia. And if an eminent leader of their sentiment, departs this life in darkness and doubt enough to damn a Universalist in their estimation, he is wafted into the presence of God by attending angels. Thus it appears, that those who profess any thing short of Universality in the love of God, are orthodox in all moods and tenses, while those who preach the fulfilment of the prayers of limitarians, are denounced as heretics, and we are charitably damned for possessing the marks and tokens which seal the safety of our opposers. These things ought not so to be.

From the Gospel Advocate.

ON CALVINISM.

Calvinism has been the general belief of the christian world for several centuries; its influence has been great, and for the most part it has been unquestionable. It has been termed orthodoxy, the doctrine of the bible, the pure gospel; the only safe road to glory, &c.

In speaking of this system of divinity, which differs essentially from the preaching of its teachers, we are astonished to find that those, who consider this system all important, and that those, who dissent from it are heretics, should, at the same time, overthrow the whole of this mighty fabric, by representing God as changeable and themselves as moving him to pity.

That God is unchangeable, there can be no doubt: why, then, would they endeavor to weaken our faith, in so important a point? Why do they use their influence to destroy the only ground of security for man? The only ground of safety, is the unchangeableness of God's good intentions or mercy towards mankind. Altho' his love be ever so great and his mercy ever so genuine, yet what would be our situation, if God were a changeable being?

If that were so, neither infinite love nor mercy could be a security to man. Likewise, if it were a truth that God

did love all the human family; still, on the principle of God's changeability, the human family could not be safe. Thus the Calvinistic preacher, in representing God as changeable, destroys the hope of all mankind: he likewise contradicts his own creed, and proves himself to be inconsistent or insincere.

On the principle, that he has elected some to everlasting life; the salvation of this elected few, and the damnation of the non-elected many, are wholly uncertain; the elect may be damned, and the non-elect may be saved. Thus, according to the preaching of the Calvinists, the salvation of the whole world or any part of it, is completely uncertain.

If their election of some and reprobation of others be true; and if God be unchangeable; then neither can the number of the elect be enlarged; nor that of the non-elect be diminished; the consequence will be, that, as no good was ever designed the reprobates, they are under no obligation; and the elect must be destitute of sympathy, humanity and a christian temper, if they can be happy.

Thus let Calvinists be really such; or let them blend Armenianism with their creed; they demonstrate to all candid men, that their foundation is bad, and that their superstructure will fall.

From the Gospel Advocate.

AN EXAMPLE WORTHY OF IMITATION.

Mr. John Winn of Champaign County, state of Ohio, was formerly a slave-holder in Kentucky, at which time he was a member of the Baptist society, and for several years strenuously advocated their cause.—But at length, he had serious impressions that his belief was not according to divine revelation; and after a general search of the scriptures, laying aside superstition, priestcraft, bigotry, &c. and calling reason in exercise, he found that the way of life and salvation was made for all—and that all created intelligence would finally be participators of the same. Under these impressions he felt the culpability of holding in bondage a part of the human family, nor could he rest till he had liberated them from slavery. Accordingly he moved them to the state of Ohio—gave to each (five in number) eighty acres of land, farming utensils, &c. and bade them work for themselves. He also gave to the state of Ohio, bonds for their good behaviour. After this, Mr. Winn, with another brother in the belief of the final salvation of all men, bought three slaves in the state of Kentucky, for whom they gave two hundred dollars: after which they set them free, gave them lands in Ohio, and became security for their good behaviour. These slaves were purchased of a baptist deacon of the same church to which Mr. Winn belonged.—Mr. Winn rejoiceth that the Lord will turn the hearts of his children unto him; that every knee will bow and every tongue swear that they have righteousness and strength in the Lord, and that all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.

A SUBSCRIBER.

FIRE.—A fire, lately broke out in this town, (Pembroke,) which had a greater effect in exciting the risibility and cogitation of some; and the natural loquacity and facetiousness of others; than it had in the real destruction of property. One entire number of the Gospel Advocate was consumed. Upon inquiry it was ascertained, not to be the effect of accident, but of pure design.

As near as we can arrive at an understanding of this modern system of torture; not of men, but of books, (for very good reasons, however,) the following appears to be a true state of facts.

A young person, in one of our limitarian families, having a desire to read the Advocate, borrowed one of its numbers for that purpose; designing, however, no manner of offence to any person on earth.—Having conveyed it home, the mother discovered it, and, with a zeal too much resem-

bling that, which in days of yore, was the cause of burning men as well as books, committed it to the flames; threatening at the same time, that a similar fate awaited every one, which should be introduced within the walls of her mansion.

It is to be hoped, that as good often comes out of evil, so from this fire some good may arise to the contemplative part of community; and that those, who have been deficient in thought heretofore, may the better judge, which is to be preferred, either a candid investigation of a subject, or a zeal, in its rejection, which is not according to knowledge.

AQUA SINE IGNE.

Ib.

From the (Boston) Universalist Magazine.

STRANGE FIRE.

"And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them; and they died before the Lord. Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified."

The strange fire which Nadab and Abihu offered before the Lord, no doubt signifies that zeal which is not according to knowledge, which too many ambitious pretenders mistake for a holy zeal, which induces them to present themselves before the people, in the name of the Lord, when their object is to sanctify themselves in the estimation of the multitude, and gain the applause of men. These fiery Levites are numerous and succeed in deceiving many.

But the discerning may easily detect their pretensions. Look carefully; does the preacher seem wholly intent on presenting himself to an acceptable advantage to the eyes of those who behold him? Does he manifestly endeavor to take an attitude and make an appearance which is pleasing to the vanity of pride and ostentation? This man does not sanctify the Lord, nor does he aim to glorify the Lord before the people; but he endeavors to glorify himself. Does the minister say much about *his* love to the people, and *his* desire for their everlasting welfare? He offers strange fire; he endeavors to glorify himself; the glory of God is out of the question. Does the minister exclude any of the people from the grace and mercy of God? Then he does not glorify God before *all* the people.

Reader, look out for Nadabs and Abihus. They are charmingly fascinating to pride and vanity; they are in great earnest to secure us the favour of God, who is dishonoured by their impious pretensions.

DEDICATION

The new Meeting-house in Medway, Mass. built and owned principally by Universalists, was solemnly consecrated to the worship of Almighty God, on the 29th ult.

Order of public service.

Brother Jacob Fricze, of Milford, read a selection of scriptures appropriate to the occasion, and made the introductory prayer.

Dr. Thomas Whittemore, of Cambridgeport, made the consecrating prayer.

Br. Hosea Ballou, of Boston, delivered the Sermon, and made the concluding prayer. The audience, on account of the incessant rain which fell that day, was not very numerous; but manifested a spirit of becoming devotedness to the solemnities of the truly joyful occasion; and the sacred music was performed in an acceptable style and manner.

It is expected that our beloved brother, Adin Ballou, will supply that desk part of the time in future. May it please our merciful Father in heaven to prosper the cause of truth in that and all other places, to the honor of the Redeemer's name.

POETRY.

PERSECUTION.

Absurd and vain attempt! to bind
With iron chains, the freeborn mind;
To force conviction, and reclaim
The wand'ring, by destructive flame!

Bold arrogance, to snatch from heaven
Dominion not to mortals given!
O'er conscience to usurp the throne,
Accountable to God alone!

Mad zeal! that fills the world with wo!
That hurls down kingdoms at a blow!
That wakens vengeance to devour
The foes of antichristian power!

Jesus, thy gentle law of love
Does no such cruelties approve;
Mild as thyself, thy doctrine wields
No arms, but what persuasion yields.

By proofs divine and reason strong,
It draws the willing soul along;
And conquests to thy church acquires,
By eloquence, which Heaven inspires.

O happy, who are thus compell'd
To the rich feast, by Jesus held!
May we this blessing know, and prize
The light which liberty supplies.

SCOTT.

MARRIED—At Holliston, by Levi Adams, Esq. Mr. ASA RIDER, to Mrs. SABRINA OSGOOD.

DIED,—At Manchester, (Conn.) on the 9th inst. Mr. MATTHEW CADWELL, aged 33 years. Mr. C. was a firm believer in the final restoration of all mankind to holiness and happiness through the merits of Christ. In him the poor have lost a friend; and community at large an honest man.

Just received, and for sale at this Office.

A PAMPHLET ENTITLED THE

FORCE OF PREJUDICE

EXHIBITED IN A CAREFUL AND CRITICAL INVESTIGATION OF

THIRTEEN RECOMMENDATIONS,

ACCOMPANYING MR. ROSWELL JUDSON'S FAMOUS LETTER, AND APPENDIX ADDRESSED TO THE REV. AR-

NER KNEELAND, ON THE SUBJECT OF

UNIVERSAL SALVATION.

"Then said the trees unto the BRAMBLE, come thou and reign over us."—JUDGES ix. 12.

—ALSO—

BALLOU ON ATONEMENT,

BALLOU'S NOTES ON THE PARABLES,

Do. SERMONS,

Do. CATECHISM,

KNEELANDS LECTURES

With a variety of other Pamphlets on various subjects.

NOTICE.

Rev. Mr. Carrique will in future preach in this city on the first and second Sabbaths in each month; in Poquonock on the third Sabbath; and in Southington on the fourth.

PRINTED BY J. T. BEEBE, SEMI-MONTHLY,
FOR THE PROPRIETORS.

A FEW RODS SOUTH OF THE LITTLE BRIDGE,
AT ONE DOLLAR PER ANNUM—PAYABLE IN ADVANCE.